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نظریه تعارض و تساقط در علم رجال: مبانی، شرایط و نقدها

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چکیده

هدف: این پژوهش با هدف بررسی مبانی نظری، شرایط جریان و پیامدهای کاربردی نظریه «تعارض و تساقط» در علم رجال انجام شده است تا نقش آن در حل اختلاف‌نظرهای مربوط به جرح و تعدیل راویان حدیث ارزیابی گردد.

روش پژوهش: این مطالعه با استفاده از روش توصیفی-تحلیلی و با اتکا به منابع اصیل رجالی، حدیثی و اصول فقه، به بررسی شرایط حاکم بر تساقط و تحلیل نمونه‌های موردی از تعارضات رجالی می‌پردازد.

یافته‌ها: یافته‌های تحقیق نشان می‌دهد جریان این نظریه منوط به پنج شرط اصلی است: وحدت موضوع، حجیت و اعتبار اپیستمی (معرفت‌شناختی) هر دو قول، تساوی دلالت، عدم امکان جمع عرفی و فقدان مرجّح معتبر. در صورت تحقق این شرایط، هر دو نظر اعتبار اثباتی و حجیت مؤثر خود را از دست می‌دهند.

نتیجه‌گیری: اگرچه نظریه تساقط در بن‌بست‌های واقعیِ معرفتی از نظر عقلی و اصولی موجه است، اما استفاده بی‌رویه از آن غالباً از طریق ریشه‌یابی دقیق علل اختلاف، جمع عرفی یا رجوع به مرجحات معتبر منتفی می‌شود. از این رو، این نظریه باید صرفاً به عنوان یک راهکار استثنایی و آخرین درمان در نقد رجالی به کار گرفته شود.

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The Theory of Conflict and Mutual Invalidation (*Taʿāruḍ wa-Tasāquṭ*) in Biographical Evaluation (*ʿIlm al-Rijāl*): Foundations, Conditions, and Critiques

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the theoretical foundations, operational conditions, and practical implications of the doctrine of "Conflict and Mutual Invalidation" (*taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ*) within the discipline of biographical evaluation (*ʿilm al-rijāl*), evaluating its role in resolving conflicting testimonies regarding hadith transmitters.
Methodology: Utilizing a descriptive-analytical methodology grounded in primary biographical (*rijālī*), hadith, and legal-theoretical (*uṣūlī*) sources, the research analyzes the conditions governing mutual invalidation and examines selected case studies of divergent transmitter evaluations.
Findings: The study identifies five essential conditions for applying *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ*: unity of subject (*waḥdat al-mawḍūʿ*), epistemic validity of both accounts, parity of indicative strength (*tasāwī al-dalālah*), impossibility of conventional harmonization (*al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*), and the absence of a recognized preponderant factor (*murajjiḥ*). When these criteria are met, both assessments lose operative probative force (*al-ḥujjiyyah al-muʾaththirah*).
Conclusion: While rationally and legally justified in genuine epistemological impasses, the unconstrained application of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* can often be avoided through rigorous historical/contextual analysis or validated preference criteria. Consequently, this theory should serve strictly as an exceptional measure of last resort in biographical critique.

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Introduction

The science of biographical evaluation (*ʿIlm al-Rijāl*) constitutes one of the foundational disciplines in Islamic hadith scholarship, playing an indispensable role in assessing the evidential weight of transmission chains (*isnāds*) and determining the probative status of traditions. A substantial dimension of hadith verification hinges upon ascertaining the qualifications of transmitters regarding probity (*ʿadālah*), accuracy and retention (*ḍabṭ*), trustworthiness (*wathāqah*), or deficiency (*ḍaʿf*). This assessment is primarily derived from the documented testimonies and critical judgments of authoritative biographical critics. Consequently, the methodological approach adopted in analyzing and evaluating *rijālī* verdicts exerts a direct, decisive impact on the acceptance or rejection of traditions, thereby fundamentally shaping the deduction of Islamic legal rulings and theological doctrines.

Central to these inquiries is one of the most pivotal and intricate problems in *ʿIlm al-Rijāl*: the divergence in the disparagement and accreditation (*al-jarḥ wa-al-taʿdīl*) of transmitters—namely, instances wherein a single transmitter is accredited by certain authorities while being impeached or weakened by others. Far from being a purely theoretical conundrum, such divergence entails significant practical ramifications for hadith textual criticism and the delimitation of its evidentiary validity. Accordingly, hadith scholars and biographical critics throughout history have sought to formulate rigorous methodological frameworks to address these contradictory assessments.

Among the frameworks advanced to resolve discrepancies between *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*, four overarching approaches may be delineated:

1. Dissolution/Removal of the apparent conflict (*rafʿ al-taʿāruḍ*),
2. Conventional harmonization (*al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*),
3. Preference/Weighing based on preponderant factors (*al-tarjīḥ*), and
4. Conflict and mutual invalidation (*al-taʿāruḍ wa-al-tasāquṭ*).

Although the doctrine of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* is conventionally posited as a measure of last resort upon the strict equipollence (*takāfuʾ*) of two contradictory testimonies, it has attained considerable prominence in contemporary *rijālī* discourse. This theory posits that when two valid, peer-level evaluations clash in the complete absence of any preponderant factor, neither the disparagement can definitively establish weakness nor can the accreditation establish trustworthiness. Consequently, the researcher is compelled to suspend judgment (*al-tawaqquf*) or conclude the non-establishment of reliability (*ʿadam iṯrāz al-wathāqah*).

The scholarly imperative to scrutinize this perspective stems from the fact that *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* is not merely a formalistic rule for adjudicating *rijālī* disputes; it is deeply anchored in legal theory (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*). The endorsement or repudiation of this doctrine bears profound consequences for the corpus of dependable narrations, hermeneutical interaction with hadith corpora, and broader confidence in the transmitted tradition. Furthermore, a rigorous deconstruction of this paradigm elucidates its procedural efficacy and clarifies the legitimate boundaries of its evidential validity.

The problem of conflicting *rijālī* testimonies has occupied the attention of later (*mutaʾakhkhirūn*) and contemporary biographical critics and legal theorists for centuries. For instance, ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī in his seminal work *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* frequently refrained from issuing definitive verdicts regarding certain transmitters, adopting an explicit posture of suspension of judgment (*tawaqquf*). Similarly, Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei in *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* repeatedly invokes concepts such as *tawaqquf*, *tasāquṭ*, and the failure to establish trustworthiness across numerous disputed entries. In contemporary scholarship, several studies have attempted to systematically elucidate Ayatollah Khoei's methodology when confronting contradictory *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* evaluations, such as the study "Ayatollah Khoei's Method in Resolving Conflicts between *Jarḥ* and *Taʿdīl*" by Fatemeh Fattāḥīzādeh and Muḥammad Kāẓim Raḥmān-Setāyish. Nonetheless, a comprehensive and systematic investigation into the theoretical foundations, operative conditions, and empirical applications of the *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* doctrine within biographical evaluation has remained insufficiently explored as an independent inquiry.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the foundational epistemic grounds upon which proponents of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* rely, the requisite constraints governing the occurrence of genuine conflict, and whether *tasāquṭ* operates as a default mechanism in resolving *rijālī* contradictions or should strictly be construed as an exceptional remedy restricted to instances of irreconcilable analytical deadlock.

Employing a descriptive-analytical approach anchored in primary biographical, hadith, and legal-theoretical literature, this study first explicates the core concepts and theoretical framework. It subsequently investigates the foundations and prerequisites for the realization of conflict and mutual invalidation, followed by empirical case studies demonstrating its practical application. Finally, by appraising the epistemic merits and methodological challenges of this doctrine, its legitimate boundaries and operational efficacy within the methodological apparatus of contemporary biographical critics are systematically evaluated.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the terms *taḍʿīf* (weakening/disparagement), *tawthīq* (authentication/accreditation), *taʿāruḍ* (conflict/contradiction), and *tasāquṭ* (mutual invalidation/nullification) are employed in accordance with their standard technical designations established in biographical criticism and legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Accordingly, a concise conceptual delineation will suffice for the analytical scope of this discussion.

By *jarḥ* (disparagement/impeachment), we denote explicit assessments made by a biographical critic attributing traits that undermine epistemic trust in a transmitter or depreciate the probative standing of their narrations—such as allegations of forgery, deficiencies in retention and accuracy (*ḍabṭ*), mental confusion or senility (*ikhtilāṭ*), doctrinal corruption, or accusations of theological extremism (*ghuluww*), all of which adversely affect the assessment of reliability (Raḥmān-Setāyish, 1389 SH, p. 90). In contrast, *taʿdīl* (accreditation/vindication) designates the attribution of qualities that establish a transmitter's reliability in reporting hadith, such as *wathāqah* (probity/trustworthiness), *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *ḍabṭ* (accurate retention), piety, or commendable praises indicative of narrative credibility.

Furthermore, an examination of the lexicon of *al-jarḥ wa-al-taʿdīl* reveals that expressions of accreditation and disparagement are not uniform in their explicitness, semantic strength, or evidential weight. While certain formulae constitute definitive, unequivocal declarations, others carry ambiguous, qualified, or probabilistically weak semantic implications. Similarly, significant gradations exist regarding the intensity with which expressions convey reliability or deficiency—variations that play a crucial role in resolving apparent discrepancies and assessing the genuine degree of conflict between competing accounts.

In the present context, *taʿāruḍ* (conflict) signifies the mutual incompatibility between two or more valid biographical testimonies regarding a single transmitter, such that upon initial inspection, their concurrent reconciliation appears impossible, with each opinion dictating a diametrically opposed verdict concerning the transmitter's reliability or weakness.

Tasāquṭ (mutual invalidation), within this discourse, refers to the forfeiture of operative probative force (*al-ḥujjiyyah al-muʾaththirah*) by both conflicting testimonies in the event of their strict equipollence (*takāfuʾ*) and the absence of a valid preponderant factor (*murajjiḥ*). In such an impasse, the *jarḥ* lacks sufficient evidentiary weight to establish deficiency, nor can

the *taʿdīl* validate trustworthiness, thereby compelling the researcher to suspend judgment (*al-tawaqquf*) or conclude the non-establishment of reliability (*ʿadam iḥrāz al-wathāqah*).

The Locus of the Theory of *Taʿāruḍ* and *Tasāquṭ* among the Methods of Resolving *Rijālī* Conflict

An examination of how biographical critics address contradictions between *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* testimonies reveals that they employ an integrated repertoire of analytical methods, which may be systematized into four overarching, sequentially ordered strategies:

1. Dissolution/Removal of the Conflict (*rafʿ al-taʿāruḍ*),
2. Conventional Harmonization (*al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*),
3. Weighing/Preference (*al-tarjīḥ*), and ultimately
4. Conflict and Mutual Invalidation (*al-taʿāruḍ wa-al-tasāquṭ*).

Each of these methods corresponds to a specific stage along the analytical continuum of resolving discrepant testimonies and observes a strict logical sequence. Before ruling that a genuine, settled conflict (*taʿāruḍ mustaqarr*) exists and invoking mutual invalidation, biographical critics invariably examine whether the apparent contradiction can be removed, the divergent statements harmonized, or one testimony preferred over the other.

In the method of dissolving the conflict (*rafʿ al-taʿāruḍ*), the governing premise is that the observed contradiction is illusory rather than genuine and enduring, having arisen from extraneous confounding factors, textual corruption, or analytical oversight. Critics therefore endeavor to eliminate the ostensible clash by identifying its root cause. Among the foremost catalysts of such disparities are the presence of fabricated reports (Jalālī & Shamshīrī, 1399 SH, p. 15), statements issued under dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) (Astarābādī, 1422 SH, Vol. 3, p. 345), the time-bound contextual nature of evaluations (Jalālī & Shamshīrī, 1399 SH, p. 15), misidentification of transmitters by biographical authors (Shushtarī, 1410 AH, Vol. 4, p. 615), jurisprudential disagreements over the criteria of *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*, strictness versus leniency in screening transmitters, ambiguity in *rijālī* terminology, and manuscript variants (Nārouʾī, 1405 SH, pp. 83–97). In this endeavor, biographical critics employ such tools as *isnād*-based critical analysis of biographical reports (Ardabīlī, 1403 SH, Vol. 2, p. 194), establishing the plurality of transmitters sharing identical names (*tasmiyah*), textual criticism of biographical manuals, exhaustive inductive survey (*sabr wa taqassī*) of a transmitter's entire corpus, and comparative collation with Sunnī *rijāl* literature—all aimed at demonstrating that the apparent discrepancy stems from historical contingencies rather than from genuine factual contradiction (Nārouʾī, 1405 SH, pp. 102–121).

In the method of conventional harmonization (*al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*), the presumption is that no genuine incompatibility exists between the evaluations and that a reasoned conciliation can be achieved through contextual interpretation. Harmonization is typically accomplished by attending to the semantic nuances of biographical terms, recognizing the graded degrees of reliability and weakness, or relating each verdict to a distinct facet of the transmitter's scholarly profile. For instance, one evaluation may pertain exclusively to a deficiency in retention and textual precision (*ḍabṭ*), whereas the opposing commendation highlights moral truthfulness (*ṣidq*) in transmission. In such cases, both evaluations coexist harmoniously without generating a substantive contradiction (ibid, p. 143).

Where neither the dissolution of the conflict nor conventional harmonization proves feasible, recourse is had to the stage of weighing/preference (*al-tarjīḥ*), whereby one of the two conflicting testimonies is given precedence over the other on the basis of validated preponderant factors (*murajjiḥāt*). Prominent among the preference factors recognized by biographical critics are the superior erudition and specialized mastery of the critic himself, chronological proximity to the transmitter's era, widespread renown (*shuhrah*), and the existence of general corroborative authentications (ibid, p. 154). Under this procedure, the evaluation corroborated by the preponderant factors serves as the definitive basis of the biographical ruling.

By contrast, the theory of conflict and mutual invalidation (*al-taʿāruḍ wa-al-tasāquṭ*) pertains strictly to the terminal stage at which all preceding mechanisms fail—that is, when the conflict cannot be dissolved, no acceptable conventional harmonization can be constructed, and no authoritative preponderant factor favors one testimony over the other. In such a scenario, both contradictory testimonies forfeit their operative probative force, rendering each incapable of affirming or negating the transmitter's reliability (ibid, p. 170). The practical consequence is the suspension of the biographical judgment (*tawaqquf*) or the formal declaration of the non-establishment of reliability (*ʿadam iḥrāz al-wathāqah*).

Accordingly, the rule of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* cannot be considered the initial recourse when confronting biographical discrepancies; rather, its very jurisprudential nature dictates that it be applied exclusively at the final stage, once conflict dissolution, harmonization, and preference have been exhausted and have reached a deadlock. The indiscriminate extension of this doctrine to all *rijālī* disputes runs counter to the established methodology of biographical critics and undermines the systematic logic of conflict analysis in the hadith sciences.

Theoretical and Legal-Theoretical Foundations of the *Rijālī Taʿāruḍ* and *Tasāquṭ* Doctrine

The primary theoretical foundation of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* within biographical evaluation rests upon its *uṣūlī* pedigree in the doctrine of conflicting evidences (*taʿāruḍ al-adillah*). According to the established principles of legal theory, whenever two valid proofs conflict in their indication regarding a single subject matter and neither possesses a validated preponderant factor, the fundamental primary principle (*al-aṣl al-awwalī*) dictates the forfeiture of actual probative force (*al-ḥujjiyyah al-fiʿliyyah*) for both proofs (Shaykh al-Anṣārī, 1427 AH, Vol. 4, p. 33).

If evaluations of *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* are conceptualized as probative indicators (*amārāt*) regarding a transmitter's reliability or unreliability, *uṣūlī* logic mandates that neither conflicting evaluation can independently serve as the basis for a definitive verdict. Consequently, in such a state of equipollence, the contested accreditation cannot establish reliability, nor can the contested disparagement substantiate deficiency.

This foundation gains even greater cogency when the evidential authority of a biographical critic's dictum is subsumed under the rubric of the solitary report (*khabar al-wāḥid*). Within this paradigm, biographical appraisals are governed by the same epistemological logic of validity and conflict that regulates informative reports. Hence, just as legal theory dictates that the collision of two reliable solitary reports devoid of a preponderant factor leads to mutual invalidation or suspension of judgment, so too in the biographical sciences two peer-level conflicting testimonies regarding a transmitter cannot simultaneously command epistemological reliance in the absence of a valid *murajjiḥ*.

Even if the authority of *rijālī* verdicts is anchored not in the rules of solitary reports, but in the principle of expert opinion (*al-khibrawiyyah*) and recourse to specialists (*al-rujūʿ ilā ahl al-khibrah*), the thesis of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* remains rationally defensible. According to the rational consensus of reasonable actors (*bināʾ al-ʿuqalāʾ*), an expert's assessment generates justified trust only insofar as it is not directly contradicted by a peer expert of equal stature. When two diametrically opposed expert evaluations clash without any preponderant factor, favoring one arbitrarily over the other constitutes unreasoned preference (*tarjīḥ bi-lā murajjiḥ*), which is rationally inadmissible. Consequently, suspension of judgment or the neutralization of their practical probative effect is naturally necessitated.

The identical analytical outcome follows if the authority of biographical testimony is categorized under the rubric of judicial testimony (*al-shahādah*). In Islamic jurisprudence, when two valid legal testimonies collide in the absence of a legally recognized criterion of preference, the default principle mandates non-preference and the consequent nullification of the dispositive evidentiary efficacy of both testimonies.

On this premise, neither *jarḥ* nor *taʿdīl* possesses an inherent, *a priori* superiority over the other unless validated evidence and preponderant factors elevate one to a preferred rank. Otherwise, the parity (*takāfuʾ*) of two biographical evaluations causes both to forfeit their dispositive efficacy at the stage of final judgment, inevitably culminating in the suspension of judgment (*al-tawaqquf*) or the formal finding of unestablished reliability (*ʿadam iḥrāz al-wathāqah*).

From this perspective, the theoretical foundation of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* in biographical evaluation represents an organic extension of the general *uṣūlī* doctrine of conflicting evidences. Insofar as biographical statements serve as probabilistic indicators (*amārah*) or epistemic conduits (*ṭarīq*) toward establishing transmitter reliability, they remain subject to the overarching universal rules governing evidential conflict. Thus, in the event of equipollence between conflicting evaluations devoid of a valid *murajjiḥ*, the ruling of *tasāquṭ* or *tawaqquf* is not an ad hoc improvisation, but the necessary corollary of foundational *uṣūlī* axioms.

Conditions for the Realization of Conflict and Mutual Invalidation in *Jarḥ* and *Taʿdīl*

Given that the problem of conflict and mutual invalidation (*al-taʿāruḍ wa-al-tasāquṭ*) in biographical statements is fundamentally reducible to the doctrine of conflicting proofs in legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), the prerequisites governing *uṣūlī* conflicts apply analogously to biographical evaluations. These requisite conditions include:

- Unity of Subject (*waḥdat al-mawḍūʿ*) (Ardabīlī, 1407 AH, Vol. 2, p. 278);
- Impossibility of Conventional Harmonization (*istiḥālat al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*) (al-Khoei, 1417 AH, Vol. 4, p. 301);
- Absence of a Valid Preponderant Factor (*ʿadam wujūd al-murajjiḥ*) (Muẓaffar, 1375 SH, Vol. 2, p. 239);
- Epistemic Validity of Both Testimonies; and
- Parity in Indicative Rank (*al-takāfuʾ fī al-martabah al-dalāliyyah*) (Shaykh al-Anṣārī, 1427 AH, Vol. 4, p. 33).

1. Unity of Subject (Waḥdat al-Mawḍūʿ)

The primary prerequisite for the realization of conflict between assessments of *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* is that both evaluations genuinely pertain to a single, identical transmitter. Otherwise, the discrepancy does not constitute a genuine conflict, but rather represents an error in the subsumption of an identifier under its referent (*inṭibāq al-ʿunwān ʿalā al-miṣdāq*). In biographical literature, phenomena such as homonymy (*ishtirāk al-asmāʾ*), similarity of patronymics (*kunā*) and titles (*alqāb*), textual variants in manuscripts, and the inadvertent conflation of multiple figures bearing identical names are well-documented sources of apparent contradiction. Consequently, prior to investigating harmonization, preference (*tarjīḥ*), or mutual invalidation (*tasāquṭ*), it must be rigorously established that the conflicting statements target an identical historical individual.

A lucid illustration of this issue is found in the disparate assessments regarding Ḥasan ibn Rāshid. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī explicitly accredits him (Ṭūsī, 1427 AH, p. 375), whereas al-Najāshī and Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī declare him weak (Najāshī, 1365, p. 38; Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī, 1380 SH, p. 49). At first glance, this disparity appears to be an irreconcilable conflict between *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*. However, a meticulous analysis of generational strata (*ṭabaqāt*) and biographical identities demonstrates that the appellation "Ḥasan ibn Rāshid" designates two distinct personalities. The figure weakened by al-Najāshī and Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī is Ḥasan ibn Rāshid al-Ṭufāwī, a companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq and Imam al-Kāẓim (peace be upon them); whereas the transmitter accredited by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī is a later figure of the same name who was among the companions of Imam al-Jawād and Imam al-Hādī (peace be upon them) (Narāqī, 1422 AH, p. 173). Consequently, this divergence does not constitute a contradiction between two evaluations of one person, but rather arises from homonymy across two distinct transmitters, thereby rendering recourse to *tasāquṭ* entirely unwarranted.

2. Epistemic Validity of Both Testimonies

The realization of conflict in *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* is contingent upon both competing testimonies possessing *prima facie* scholarly and biographical credibility. If one of the evaluations originates from an authority lacking recognized *rijālī* competence or the requisite reliability, it lacks the evidentiary force necessary to confront an accredited dictum. In such circumstances, an established conflict cannot materialize because one side lacks the fundamental locus of contestation from the outset. For this reason,

numerous biographical researchers do not regard discrepancies between master critics such as al-Najāshī or Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and certain impeachments attributed to Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī as genuine conflicts, given the longstanding scholarly dispute surrounding the authenticity of the treatise attributed to Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī and the reliability of reports transmitted through it (Khoei, 1372, Vol. 16, p. 133).

For instance, regarding Ali ibn Maymūn, an ostensible conflict exists between the commendable mention recorded in *Rijāl al-Kashshī* (Ṭūsī, 1404 AH, Vol. 2, p. 661) and the censure of Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī (Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī, 1380 SH, p. 73). However, al-Māmaqānī notes that Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī's excessive severity and haste in weakening transmitters render his individual evaluations subject to scholarly reservation in specific contexts (Māmaqānī, n.d., Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 312). Furthermore, Ayatollah al-Khoei does not consider the attribution of the extant biographical treatise to Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī to be historically established, and consequently discounts its solitary impeachments as lacking evidentiary reliability (Khoei, 1372, Vol. 13, p. 133). Therefore, whenever one of the two competing accounts lacks sufficient epistemic validity, no genuine conflict is generated.

3. Parity in the Indicative Significance of Both Testimonies

Even granting the epistemic validity of both testimonies, the actualization of conflict requires that both evaluations stand at an equivalent level of semantic clarity, explicitness, and apparent textual strength (*ẓuhūr*). If one statement is manifestly more explicit or semantically decisive regarding the intended assessment, equipollence (*takāfuʾ*) does not obtain, thereby opening the way to prefer the stronger declaration.

In other words, an established conflict arises only when two biographical assessments possessing virtually equal indicative weight yield contradictory conclusions. Where one expression constitutes an explicit accreditation (*taʿdīl*) or disparagement (*jarḥ*) while the other remains ambiguous (*mujmal*) or susceptible to alternative interpretations, the established convention of biographical critics gives precedence to the explicit statement.

For example, concerning Ali ibn Jaʿfar al-Hammānī, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī explicitly accredits him (Ṭūsī, 1427 AH, p. 388), whereas al-Najāshī employs the qualified expression *yuʿrafu minhu wa-yunkar* ("some of his traditions are recognized while others are disclaimed"), an ambiguous phrase open to diverse interpretations (Najāshī, 1365, p. 280). In this scenario, an established conflict does not materialize, because the explicit accreditation

takes precedence over the ambiguous and non-explicit phrasing. Thus, relative parity in indicative explicitness constitutes an essential prerequisite for actualizing conflict and invoking *tasāquṭ*.

4. Impossibility of Conventional Harmonization (al-Jamʿ al-ʿUrfī)

A fundamental prerequisite for the emergence of an established conflict in *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* is the impossibility of constructing a sound conventional harmonization between the two contradictory statements. In practice, a substantial portion of biographical discrepancies can be reconciled upon examining chronological indicators, the context of issuance, and the multifaceted dimensions of biographical judgment. For instance, a transmitter may have been fully reliable during one period of his life, but was subsequently weakened due to sectarian deviation, mental deterioration/confusion (*ikhtilāṭ*), or mnemonic impairment—or conversely, may have undergone reform. Similarly, one statement may appraise veracity in reporting hadith, while the opposing censure pertains strictly to doctrinal corruption (*fasād al-madhhab*) or personal dispositions that do not necessarily compromise truthfulness in narration.

A clear illustration of this scenario is provided by the case of ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Abī Zayd al-Anbārī. Al-Najāshī accredits him (Najāshī, 1365, p. 280), whereas Shaykh al-Ṭūsī weakens him (Ṭūsī, 1427 AH, p. 434). Nevertheless, researchers suggest that this divergence reflects differing familiarity with successive phases of his life: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's disparagement relates to his earlier period, while al-Najāshī's accreditation reflects his later, reformed condition (Najāshī, 1365, p. 280). In such instances, before conceding genuine conflict, the potential for conventional harmonization or chronological contextualization must be thoroughly exhausted.

Similarly, the apparent conflict among narrations of praise and censure regarding eminent early Shīʿī Companions—such as Zurārah ibn Aʿyan, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, Yūnus ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, and others—falls within this category. In addressing these traditions, biographical authorities and traditionists have resolved the ostensible contradictions through harmonization, interpreting reports of censure as expressions of protective dissimulation (*taqiyyah*), pedagogical testing, stratagems to safeguard Companions from political persecution, or specific historical exigencies. Hence, an established conflict may be affirmed only when all reasonable avenues for reconciliation and contextualization have been explored and proven unfeasible.

5. Absence of a Valid Preponderant Factor (al-Murajjiḥ)

An indispensable prerequisite for decreeing *tasāquṭ* is the total absence of a validated preponderant factor favoring one of the two conflicting testimonies. Whenever an authoritative indicator or epistemic merit reinforces one evaluation, the conflict ceases to be equipollent, thereby enabling preference (*tarjīḥ*). Preponderance factors in biographical criticism derive from diverse parameters: the critic's superior erudition and precision (*aḍbaṭiyyah*), chronological proximity to the transmitter's lifetime, a numerical preponderance of corroborating opinions, widespread consensus among biographical authorities, or empirical indicators such as the normative reliance of the early Companions and jurists upon the transmitter's reports (*ʿamal al-aṣḥāb*).

For instance, regarding transmitters such as Muḥammad ibn Khālid (Māzandarānī Ḥāʾirī, 1416 AH, Vol. 6, p. 46; Māmaqānī, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 113), Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿUbayd (Māmaqānī, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 168), Ḥarīz ibn ʿAbd Allāh (Ibid, 1381 SH, Vol. 18, p. 209), and ʿUthmān ibn ʿĪsā (Ibid, n.d., Vol. 2, part. 1, p. 248), numerous biographical authorities preferred accreditation by citing the widespread practice and consensus of early jurists who relied upon their transmissions. In these instances, the extensive reception and legal deployment of a transmitter's reports in hadith and juridical compendia functioned as compelling evidence of empirical validation, tilting the balance in favor of *taʿdīl* over *jarḥ*. Consequently, discerning biographical scholars rigorously investigate all potential *murajjiḥāt* before resorting to *tasāquṭ*, since mutual invalidation is the procedural consequence of a verified absence of preponderance following exhaustive inquiry, rather than an initial, default rule.

6. Non-Conflict of Preponderance Factors (ʿAdam Taʿāruḍ al-Murajjiḥāt)

In complex scenarios, the difficulty of resolving a biographical dispute lies not in the absence of a preponderant factor, but in the direct collision and mutual tension (*tazāḥum*) among competing *murajjiḥāt* themselves. That is, each conflicting evaluation is corroborated by a distinct, valid preponderant factor; yet, owing to their divergent epistemic foundations and varying degrees of evidential disclosure (*kāshifiyyah*), these factors dictate contradictory outcomes. In such a predicament, the methodological challenge transcends merely locating a preference factor, requiring instead the determination of a hierarchical ranking and epistemic priority among the competing *murajjiḥāt*.

This nuance is explicitly addressed in biographical treatises. For example, al-Khwājūʾī, while invoking the superior precision (*aḍbaṭiyyah*) of al-Najāshī in numerous instances, qualifies this rule: he maintains that al-Najāshī's preference applies only when it does not confront an explicit *jarḥ*; otherwise, the classical axiom according priority to *jarḥ* over *taʿdīl* supersedes even the verdict of the most rigorous critic (Khwājūʾī, 1372 SH, p. 317). A concrete illustration is found in the case of Muḥammad ibn Khālid: if al-Najāshī's superior precision and rigor are accepted as the primary *murajjiḥ*, the disparagement of the transmitter is reinforced, given al-Najāshī's preeminent standing in accuracy and exhaustive research (Māmaqānī, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 113). Conversely, if the normative practice of jurists and their legal rulings based upon his narrations are adopted as the authoritative *murajjiḥ*, the verdict shifts decisively toward accreditation or, at the very least, the practical probative acceptance of his transmissions (Māzandarānī Ḥāʾirī, 1416 AH, Vol. 6, p. 46; Māmaqānī, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 113). Without an established epistemological hierarchy of preponderant factors, a consistent resolution remains elusive.

Empirical Case Studies of Biographical Conflict and Invalidation

An essential benchmark for evaluating the operational efficacy of any theoretical framework in hadith sciences is examining its empirical application within primary biographical compendia. The doctrine of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* is properly tested when analyzing cases where biographical evaluations diverge so profoundly that neither conventional harmonization (*al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*) is viable nor an unequivocal preponderant factor (*murajjiḥ*) is available. In such instances, the inquiry typically results in the suspension of judgment (*tawaqquf*), a declaration of unestablished probity, or the practical forfeiture of dispositive probative authority by both conflicting evaluations.

Case 1: ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Zayd

A notable discrepancy exists regarding ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Zayd: al-Najāshī explicitly accredits him (Najāshī, 1365 SH, p. 232), whereas Shaykh al-Ṭūsī disparages him (Ṭūsī, 1427 AH, p. 434). After reviewing both positions, Ayatollah al-Khoei explores the possibility of preference, considering the recognized superior accuracy and precision (*aḍbaṭiyyah*) of al-Najāshī as a candidate *murajjiḥ*; nonetheless, he deems this factor insufficient for definitive preference in this instance. Consequently, he concludes that the

two evaluations stand in irreconcilable conflict, precluding an affirmative verdict on the transmitter's reliability (Khoei, 1372, Vol. 11, p. 98). The evident methodological implication is that neither statement can exercise a dispositive role in establishing reliability or weakness, resulting in unestablished trustworthiness (*wathāqah*)—an outcome analytically congruent with the operative doctrine of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ*.

Case 2: Muḥammad ibn Awramah

Muḥammad ibn Awramah is among the transmitters concerning whom divergent and contradictory testimonies have been transmitted, blending commendation with severe censure. On the one hand, Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī writes: *"His hadith is pristine, free of corruption, and I have seen nothing in it that causes internal unease"* (Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī, 1380 SH, p. 93), while al-Najāshī affirms regarding his corpus: "His books are authentic" (Najāshī, 1365 SH, p. 329). Moreover, an epistle (*tawqīʿ*) issued by Imam al-Hādī (a.s) addressed to the scholars of Qom is documented, defending Ibn Awramah and exonerating him from the accusations leveled against him (Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī, 1380 SH, p. 93). In stark contrast, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī notes: *"There is confusion (takhliṭ) in his narration"* (Ṭūsī, 1420 AH, p. 407) and classifies him as "weak" in his *Rijāl* (Ibid, 1427 AH, p. 448). Al-Najāshī himself, despite validating his books, cautions regarding his solitary transmissions*: "Do not rely on what he narrates uniquely,"* adding that the scholars of Qom impugned him and accused him of theological extremism (*ghuluww*) (Najāshī, 1365 SH, p. 329).

The totality of these statements presents a profoundly conflicting profile of Muḥammad ibn Awramah. Consequently, ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī, in view of the irreconcilable discrepancy, issued a formal ruling of suspension of judgment (*tawaqquf*) concerning him (Ḥillī, 1402 AH, p. 253). Although *tawaqquf* is terminologically distinct from *tasāquṭ*, it is practically equivalent in its juridical consequence: neither the accreditations independently yield an affirmative verdict of reliability, nor do the disparagements conclusively establish weakness. Both categories of testimony are neutralized in the final operative assessment—a condition systematically explicable through the epistemic logic of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ*.

Case 3: Ḥudhayfah ibn Manṣūr

A significant divergence is likewise recorded regarding Ḥudhayfah ibn Manṣūr. Al-Najāshī explicitly accredits him (Najāshī, 1365 SH/1986, p.

147), whereas Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī remarks: *"His hadith is not pristine; he transmits both the sound and the defective, his affair is ambiguous, and he is cited only as corroborating testimony (shāhid)"* (Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī, 1380 SH, p. 50). This phrasing conveys Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī's view that his narrations suffer from corruption and a lack of purity, precluding unqualified reliance. Consequently, these two assessments present antithetical portraits: explicit accreditation by al-Najāshī versus critical skepticism by Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī. Confronted with this impasse, ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī suspended judgment (*tawaqquf*) regarding Ḥudhayfah ibn Manṣūr (Ḥillī, 1402 AH, p. 60).

These three instances represent only a small sample of transmitters regarding whom biographical critics suspended judgment due to contradictory evaluations of *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*. In reality, the scope of *tawaqquf* is extensive; ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī in *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* consistently withheld definitive judgment on numerous transmitters owing to irreconcilable testimonies. Prominent examples include Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥallāl (ibid, p. 14), Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿUbayd (ibid., p. 26), Dāwūd ibn Kathīr (ibid., p. 67), and Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Anmāṭī (ibid., p. 198), among many others populating this category.

Critical Appraisal and Critique of Contemporary Proponents of *Taʿāruḍ* and *Tasāquṭ*

From a methodological vantage point, the theory of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* embodies commendable epistemological discipline. It acts as a formidable safeguard preventing researchers from making arbitrary, subjective, or preconceived choices when confronting serious biographical discrepancies. By mandating the affirmative verification of reliability, it insulates the circle of authentic transmitters from undisciplined inflation and imposes methodical rigor upon hadith acceptance.

Furthermore, this doctrine aligns seamlessly with the foundational *uṣūlī* logic of conflicting proofs (*taʿāruḍ al-adillah*), whereby the primary default upon the equipollence of two proofs lacking a preponderant factor is forfeiture of active authority or practical suspension. It likewise comports with the imperative theological caution required when attributing traditions to the Infallibles (peace be upon them), preventing definitive attributions in scenarios of irremediable doubt.

Nevertheless, the theory faces serious methodological challenges. The most critical vulnerability is the unwarranted proliferation of *tasāquṭ*: if the threshold for establishing conflict is construed too broadly, an extensive corpus of narrations risks immediate disenfranchisement from evidentiary

validity, culminating in severe, tangible constraints upon legal and doctrinal deduction—especially in legal domains where available proof-texts are scarce. Additionally, identifying an established conflict and verifying genuine equipollence between two testimonies is extraordinarily arduous in practice. Exhaustive inductive research often reveals plausible conventional harmonizations or uncovers latent preponderant factors, which hasty declarations of *tasāquṭ* prematurely bypass. Re-examining the aforementioned empirical cases demonstrates how the mechanical application of *tasāquṭ* can be critically challenged.

Critique of Case 1: ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Zayd

Citing ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Zayd as proof of *tasāquṭ* presupposes the rejection of al-Najāshī's superior precision (*aḍbaṭiyyah*) over Shaykh al-Ṭūsī as a decisive *murajjiḥ*; for if this factor is affirmed, al-Najāshī's accreditation supersedes al-Ṭūsī's weakening, preventing an established conflict from arising. Although Ayatollah al-Khoei considered al-Najāshī's precision insufficient in this specific entry (Khoei, 1372, Vol. 11, p. 98), he explicitly upholds al-Najāshī's superior precision as a dispositive preponderant factor across numerous other cases—including Muḥammad ibn Khālid ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (ibid., Vol. 17, p. 73), Saʿd ibn Saʿd (ibid., Vol. 9, p. 64), Ḥasan ibn ʿAṭiyyah (ibid., Vol. 5, p. 374), and Aḥmad ibn ʿAlawiyyah (ibid., Vol. 2, p. 161). This demonstrates that the principle of preference via *aḍbaṭiyyah* is recognized by him, despite an anomalous application in this instance. Consequently, applying this preponderant factor removes ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Zayd from the scope of *tasāquṭ* entirely, eliminating the need to suspend judgment.

Critique of Case 2: Muḥammad ibn Awramah

A rigorous investigation reveals that the reported conflict concerning Muḥammad ibn Awramah is not irreconcilable. The primary catalyst for his impeachment was the accusation of theological extremism (*ghuluww*). However, first, the specific accusers remain anonymous, leading eminent critics like al-Najāshī and even Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī to discount these allegations in their final verdicts. Second, the conception of *ghuluww* among early scholars was fluid and historically unrefined; in numerous instances, it was loosely applied to theological doctrines (such as the expansive knowledge or cosmic status of the Imams) that subsequently gained orthodox acceptance within mainstream Imami theology (Māmaqānī, 1381 SH, Vol. 19, p. 164).

Thus, a naked allegation of *ghuluww*—divorced from contextual semantics—cannot serve as a definitive basis for weakening. Furthermore, multifaceted evidence substantiates his reliability: al-Najāshī's affirmation of the soundness of his books, an official epistle (*tawqīʿ*) from Imam al-Hādī (a.s) defending his orthodoxy, Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī's explicit exoneration of his hadith from corruption, reports of his exemplary piety, his authorship of a polemical refutation titled *al-Raddʿalā al-Ghālīyah*, and his transmission of traditions explicitly repudiating extremism (Ibid, n.d., Vol. 2, p. 84). Deconstructing the root of the *jarḥ* and incorporating corroborating proofs enables decisive preference for *taʿdīl*, resolving the apparent conflict without invoking *tasāquṭ*.

Critique of Case 3: Ḥudhayfah ibn Manṣūr

Regarding Ḥudhayfah ibn Manṣūr, critical scholars have questioned the occurrence of an established conflict from the outset. Al-Tafrīshī, through semantic analysis of Ibn al-Ghaḍāʾirī's wording, argues that the phrase *"his hadith is not pristine; he transmits the sound and the defective, and his affair is ambiguous"* does not carry an explicit indication of intrinsic personal *jarḥ*; rather, it reflects textual contamination in certain transmissions or a lack of absolute purity across his corpus. Hence, such ambiguous phrasing cannot evidentiary-wise oppose the explicit, unequivocal accreditation of al-Najāshī (Tafrīshī, 1418 AH, Vol. 1, p. 407). Furthermore, the principle of preferring al-Najāshī due to superior accuracy (*aḍbaṭiyyah*) decisively bolsters the accreditation. Moreover, al-Māmaqānī, citing ʿAllāmah al-Majlisī, observes that an inductive analysis of Ḥudhayfah's entire corpus reveals that the sole substantial objection centers on a single tradition concerning the non-decrease of the month of Ramadan; excluding that isolated report leaves his remaining narrations entirely unproblematic (Māmaqānī, 1381 SH, Vol. 18, p. 125). This confirms that the objection pertains to an isolated report rather than the personal reliability of the transmitter. Thus, the discrepancy is fully resolvable through semantic and *isnād* criticism, precluding its designation as a definitive instance of *tasāquṭ*.

Conclusion

1. Four Sequential Strategies: Analysis of the primary biographical literature demonstrates that, when confronted with discrepancies between *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*, biographical critics employ four principal strategies in sequence: (a) dissolution of the conflict (*rafʿ al-taʿāruḍ*), (b) conventional

harmonization (*al-jamʿ al-ʿurfī*), © preference (*tarjīḥ*), and (d) conflict and mutual invalidation (*taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ*). These strategies constitute successive stages of an integrated analytical procedure, in which *tasāquṭ* is invoked only when the preceding three avenues prove unavailing.

2. Theoretical Grounding in *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*: The theory of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* is grounded in the *uṣūlī* doctrine of conflicting proofs: when two valid evidences are equipollent and neither is supported by a preponderant factor, both forfeit operative evidentiary authority. This principle remains coherent and defensible whether the probative authority of a biographical statement is justified under the rubric of a solitary report (*khabar al-wāḥid*), expert authority (*khibrawiyyah*), or judicial testimony (*shahādah*).

3. Six Cumulative Prerequisites: The actualization of an established conflict between *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* is strictly contingent upon six cumulative prerequisites: (a) unity of subject, establishing that both evaluations concern the same historical transmitter; (b) the epistemic validity of both testimonies; (c) parity, or approximate semantic equivalence, in their indicative clarity and explicitness; (d) the impossibility of conventional harmonization; (e) the complete absence of a validated preponderant factor; and (f) the absence of an unresolved higher-order conflict among competing preponderant factors. Unless all six conditions are satisfied, recourse to *tasāquṭ* remains methodologically premature.

4. Prior Resolution of Apparent Conflicts: Examination of these prerequisites demonstrates that many apparent contradictions in the biographical literature can be dissolved or harmonized before the stage of *tasāquṭ* is reached. Factors such as homonymy, chronological contextualization, divergent methodological criteria governing *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*, and semantic analysis of specialized critical terminology frequently disclose the source of an apparent discrepancy and thereby prevent the formation of a genuine conflict.

5. Multiplicity of Preponderant Factors: Where conventional harmonization remains unavailable, biographical critics frequently draw upon a substantial array of preponderant factors to prefer one testimony over another. These include the critic's superior erudition and precision (*aḍbaṭiyyah*), chronological proximity to the transmitter, corroboration by other biographical authorities, widespread scholarly acceptance, and empirical considerations such as the normative reliance of early jurists upon the transmitter's reports (*ʿamal al-aṣḥāb*).

6. Higher-Order Conflict among Preponderant Factors: In more complex cases, the inquiry moves beyond the conflict between the primary

testimonies to a higher-order conflict among competing preponderant factors (*taʿāruḍ al-murajjiḥāt*), each of which supports a different evaluation. Resolving such cases requires assessing the respective degree of evidential disclosure (*kāshifiyyah*) and hierarchical priority of the competing *murajjiḥāt*. This difficulty underscores the need for a systematic and theoretically grounded hierarchy of preponderant factors in biographical criticism.

7. Limited Necessity of Mutual Invalidation in Empirical Cases: Detailed analysis of the contested case studies indicates that, in most instances, careful investigation into the genesis of the disagreement, rigorous semantic analysis of the terminology of *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl*, or the judicious application of validated preponderant factors permits the apparent conflict to be dissolved, harmonized, or decisively resolved. Accordingly, recourse to *tasāquṭ* proves unnecessary in many cases initially presented as paradigmatic instances of mutual invalidation.

8. Methodological Merit and Systemic Risk: The theory of *taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ* possesses significant methodological merit: it constrains arbitrary or subjective judgment in transmitter evaluation and rigorously enforces the requirement of affirmative proof of reliability. Its principal systemic risk, however, lies in the overextension of mutual invalidation. Prematurely decreeing *tasāquṭ*, before exhausting the possibilities of conflict dissolution, harmonization, and preference, may needlessly contract the corpus of hadith capable of serving as evidence, particularly in fields in which the available proof-texts are already limited.

9. Final Synthesis: This study concludes that the theory of conflict and mutual invalidation (*taʿāruḍ wa-tasāquṭ*) constitutes a legitimate and methodologically rigorous mechanism for addressing biographical disputes, provided that it operates within a carefully disciplined and narrowly circumscribed framework. Its application must therefore remain confined to genuine analytical impasses. Wherever the source of the divergence can be identified, a conventional harmonization can be sustained, or one evaluation can be preferred on the basis of a validated preponderant factor, invoking *tasāquṭ* is not merely unnecessary; it also entails an unwarranted contraction of the evidentiary resources of hadith literature.

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